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# homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE

Monday, May 4, 1942

SUBJECT: "GREEN GROW THE VITAMINS." Information from food specialists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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The first vegetables to be up and ready for eating in the spring and some of the last to be ready in the fall are green--beet greens, turnip, mustard and all the other good garden greens as well as all the wild greens in the fields. From the day you serve the family their first batch of spring greens or the first dish of new green peas on through the season, you have a whole procession of good green vegetables to choose for family meals.

Do you eat at least one green vegetable every day--more if possible? That's what the guide to good diet, drawn up by the Nation's nutrition experts, says everybody needs. For green vegetables are rich in many of the food values necessary for good health.

Green vegetables have their place, too, in meals that taste good and look good. With their pretty green color, and their fine fresh flavor they are perfect side-partners for meat and potatoes. The smart cook fixes vegetables for the table so they keep their fresh garden look and taste, along with their minerals and vitamins. The smart cook knows overcooking green vegetables is a crime,<sup>and</sup> so is pouring down the sink the juice they cooked in--the good old-fashioned pot liquor.

How to make the most of green vegetables? How to preserve all their goodness--fresh taste and flavor, and texture as well as those vitamins and minerals? Here's how: Use the vegetables as soon as you can after they come from market or garden. If you must keep them a day or two, store them in a cool place away from dust and flies. Just before you use them, wash them quickly and thoroughly in cold water, but don't let them soak in water. Food value soaks out as vegetables stand in



water. To get rid of sand and dirt, lift the vegetable up out of washing-water instead of pouring the water off the vegetable. Keep salad greens crisp by wrapping them in a clean cloth, and keeping them covered in a cold place.

Now for the easy rules for cooking green vegetables to preserve the goodness Mother Nature put into them: Rule No. One: Cook vegetables rapidly, and if you cook in water, use a small amount of boiling salted water. Cook only until just tender--a very short time. And never add soda to the cooking water because soda destroys vitamins.

Rule No. Two: Have the water boiling when you put the green vegetables on to cook.

Rule No. Three: Leave off the lid to keep the green color. With leafy vegetables, use a lid just at the start until the vegetables are wilted.

Rule No. Four: Serve all the juice with the cooked vegetables, or use the juice in soup, sauce, stew or gravy. That's being thrifty with the vitamins that dissolve in water.

The best known of all ways to cook green vegetables is to boil. But remember to boil in an open kettle and make the boiling speedy in as little water as possible. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and melted butter or other fat. For a different flavor for boiled vegetables, add chopped parsley, or chives, or herbs just before serving. You'll find that the family will have more of an appetite for green vegetables if you arrange them on the plate so that they look attractive. No vegetables look appetizing if they are just dumped on a dish or floating in water. And be sure to serve them while they're hot, too. Lukewarm or chilly vegetables aren't cheerful eating.

Boiling, popular as it is, is not the only good way to cook vegetables. Fanning is a quick and easy, top-of-stove way to cook many vegetables. Fanning is thrifty of food values, too, for the vegetable is cooked and served in its own





juice with just enough fat for seasoning. Some of the vegetables that "take to" panning are! cabbage, shredded in narrow strips...kale, stripped from the tough midribs...spinach...summer squash, cut in small pieces...okra, with the pods sliced crosswise...and sometimes very tender green beans, sliced thin. For each quart of the vegetable—measured after you cut and prepare it—allow 2 tablespoons of fat. Melt the fat in a heavy flat pan. Add the vegetable. Then cover to hold in the steam. Cook the vegetable slowly a few minutes until tender but not mushy. Now and then give it a stir to keep it from sticking to the pan. When ready to serve, season with salt and pepper to taste. Save drippings from roast meat, fried sausage, or bacon and use them as the fat for panning vegetables. Or fry small pieces of salt pork or bacon and use the fat for panning vegetables. Add the crisp bits of meat just before serving. You can also add milk to panned vegetables just before serving and thicken with a little flour.

A delicious, quick and easy way to fix spring greens is to wilt them—as Grandmother used to do. Wilted garden lettuce and wilted tender dandelion greens were old-fashioned favorites. Here's how: chop a small onion and cook in one-fourth cup of bacon fat until <sup>the onion</sup> turns yellow. Add a half cup of vinegar, and when it is hot, add the greens. Cover and cook until they are wilted. Season with salt and pepper, and serve hot.

Green vegetables are often good cooked in milk. And they're good served with white sauce, or baked in the oven with bread crumbs. Some green vegetables, like spinach, make a delicious loaf with bread crumbs or with meat. And green vegetables make a delicious springtime omelet. But there. Why go on telling you about different good ways to use green vegetables when you can read all about them yourself in a new leaflet published by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Write a postcard for the new leaflet called "Green Vegetables in Low Cost Meals." It's free as long as the supply lasts. Address your request to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

